

Importance-Agreement Analysis

Fort Lauderdale, Florida

Overview

Today, city officials have limited time and resources to address every need of every employee. In order to maximize the impact of organizational improvement initiatives, cities need to prioritize improvements in areas that will have the greatest overall benefit to their organization.

Two factors obtained from the survey data should be used to evaluate the priority of any organizational improvement. First, what percentage of employees think it is important for the city to make improvements in an area. Second, what percentage of employees think the city is currently performing well in an area.

The Importance-Agreement (IA) rating is a unique tool that allows public administrators to better understand both of these highly important decision making criteria. The Importance-Agreement rating is based on the concept that cities will maximize overall satisfaction and productivity among employees by emphasizing improvements in areas where the level of satisfaction is relatively low and the perceived importance is relatively high.

Methodology

The IA rating was generated for seven of the eight core areas addressed in the survey. The rating was not calculated for “perceptions of management” because importance data was not collected in this area.

The rating was calculated by summing the percentage of respondents who selected an item as the first or second most important area for the City to emphasize over the next two years. This sum was then multiplied by 1 minus the percentage of respondents who agreed with positive statements about the City’s current performance in an area. [The percentage that disagreed was used to calculate the IA rating for negative statements.] “Does Not Apply” responses were excluded from the calculation to ensure that the ratings among all areas were comparable. $[IA = \text{Importance\%} \times (1 - \text{Agreement\%})]$.

Example of the Calculation. Within each core area on the survey, respondents were asked to identify the two most important improvements for the City to make over the next two years. In the area of Resources, 3% of the employees *who had an opinion* selected improvements to the City’s voice mail system as one of the their top two choices. The combined sum of 3% ranked improvements to the City’s voice mail system as the eighth most important item to emphasize over the next two years.

With regard to agreement, *the current quality of the City's voice mail system* was ranked second among the nine items rated with 70% rating the quality of the City's voice mail system as a "4" or a "5" on a 5-point scale, excluding "Does Not Apply" responses.

The IA rating for *the City's voice mail system* was calculated by multiplying the sum of the most important percentages by 1 minus the sum of the agreement percentages. In this example, 3% was multiplied by 30% (1-0.70). This calculation yielded an IA rating of 0.0090, which was ranked eighth out of nine items.

The maximum IA rating is 1.00 and would be achieved when 100% of the respondents select an activity as one of their top two choices to emphasize over the next two years and 0% indicate that they think the City is doing a good job in the area.

The lowest rating is 0.00 and could be achieved under either one of the following two situations:

- if 100% of the respondents agreed that the City is doing a good job in an area
- if none (0%) of the respondents selected the item as one of the two most important items for the City to emphasize over the next two years.

Interpreting the Ratings

- **Very high priority:** In general, ratings that are greater than 0.20 identify areas that should be very high priorities for the City. These issues probably effect employees in all city departments. In this range, the City should significantly increase the current level of emphasis.
- **High priority:** Ratings from 0.10 to 0.20 identify areas that are high priorities for the City. Although not the highest priority for the City as a whole, these items may be highest priorities for one or more departments within the City.
- **Medium priority:** Ratings that are between 0.05 and 0.10 generally identify areas that are of medium priority for the organization as a whole.
- **Lower priority:** Ratings that are 0.05 or less identify service areas that are perceived to be lower priorities over the next two years. **The exception to this guideline involves issues related to discrimination. The City should take all steps necessary to minimize and/or eliminate racial, ethnic, and gender discrimination in the work place regardless of the IA rating.**